

Cannabis research task force begins work

By Paris Achen
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A new cannabis research task force began work Dec. 14 to try to clear the way for more research in Oregon on the medical benefits of cannabis.

Created by legislation earlier this year, the task force is laying the groundwork for a state-backed medical marijuana research program that might include participation by state universities and the private sector and establishment of a state garden.

"Hopefully, at the end, we can put some kind of program in place or start the ball rolling for it," said task force Chairman Mowgli Holmes, chief scientific officer at Phytos Bioscience.

Holmes said he envisions creating a grant review board that would make its own decisions about what research to do.

Oregon legalized medical



Jars of marijuana sit in a display case at Sweet Relief in Astoria on Oct. 1. A new cannabis research task force began work Dec. 14 to try to clear the way for more research in Oregon on the medical benefits of cannabis.

marijuana in 1998. More than 60,000 residents have medical marijuana cards, according to a draft task force report. Task force member Peter Gendron, a marijuana grower in Josephine County, said the medical marijuana participants are an un-

tapped resource of data on the medical benefits of cannabis.

Most of the obstacles to doing research come from the Controlled Substance Act of 1970. Clinical studies on humans require approval from an institutional research re-

view board, the Federal Drug Administration and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Researchers may use only research-grade cannabis provided by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Three states — California, Colorado and Minnesota — already have medical cannabis research programs that do either clinical or observational studies, according to a review by Oregon State University on behalf of Oregon Health Authority.

California launched the University of California Center for Medicinal Cannabis Research in 1999 and has done 13 studies funded by \$8.7 million, approved by the Legislature. Some of the studies have looked at the effect of cannabis on neuropathic pain, multiple sclerosis and AIDS, said Candice Beathard, an OSU postdoctoral research associate.

Colorado began a Medical Marijuana Research Grant Program in 2014 and has nine proposed studies, also funded with \$9 million in state revenue.

Minnesota, which has one of the strictest medical marijuana programs in the nation, is using the 662 patients in the program to study the effect of the cannabis on different medical conditions and symptoms, Beathard said. By joining the medical marijuana program, patients agree to have information about their purchases from dispensaries recorded and are required to fill out a survey at time of purchase so researchers can track their pain levels, sleep, anxiety and other symptoms, she said.

Task force members Monday began identifying categories of research they would recommend the research program pursue. Some preliminary categories include

clinical studies, observational studies, agricultural research and research related to public health.

The task force is scheduled to have two more meetings in January during which they plan to narrow down legal barriers to doing cannabis research and finalize their recommendations to the Legislature. The recommendations will be presented in a report to lawmakers in February.

The Legislature created the task force with Senate Bill 844. Sen. Chris Edwards, D-Eugene, who helped craft the bill, sits on the task force.

"Doing what we need to do to unlock the research potential and open up the gates for that research to happen is Job 1 of the task force," Edwards said.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

State rep pushes for student threat assessment system

By Paris Achen
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A state representative on the Oregon Task Force on School Safety says he'll push for legislation in 2016 to establish a statewide student threat assessment system.

Rep. Jeff Barker, D-Aloha, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, already submitted a bill for February's short session that would fund a statewide student threat tip line, where anonymous reports could be made.

The threat assessment system and tip line both come from a list of legislative recommendations the task force made in November to help prevent mass killings at schools.

"Without the threat assessment, the tip line system would not be as strong," said task force member Dave Novotney, superintendent of Willamette Education Service District.

"The way the subcommittee envisioned the tip line and threat assessment system is it will work like a hand and glove go together, a system of giving information to school officials early and allowing them to interact in a very effective way and have a multidisciplinary, multiagency response," Novotney said. "That is the best practice to deal with threats of violence."

School representatives on the task force said Friday the tip line would spawn an influx of tips to which school staff have no additional capacity or training to respond.

"The data doesn't speak well that we are handling tips as well as we should. Shootings and suicide are happening at accelerated rate," Novotney said. "Getting additional tips and handling the exact same way we always have been is probably going to be ineffective."

I think we are setting up our schools and districts for failure if we don't empower them to know about how to assess those tips," said Susan Graves, safety coordinator for Lincoln County School District. "The consequences can be enormous."

Barker's bill asks for about \$300,000 per biennium for a tip line, but an exact cost has yet to be determined. Oregon State Police just put out a request for proposals Wednesday for the tip line, said Capt. Tom Worthy.

Initial estimates for the threat assessment system are about \$1 million, Novotney said.

Brown outlines three-part blueprint for state

By Paris Achen
Capital Bureau

PORTRLAND — Gov. Kate Brown outlined a three-part blueprint for the state Dec. 14 to fix government, grow the economy and invest in education.

Brown unveiled her goals during a keynote address at the annual Oregon Business Leadership Summit.

As part of her goal to increase government transparency and accountability, Brown plans to base agency funding on reaching specific outcomes, specifically in education, health care and public safety.

She said the plan for outcome-based budgeting is "one of the most important things" she would do as governor.

"State government must demonstrate to Oregonians that they are getting the best return for their taxpayer dollars, that their agencies are being run efficiently and effectively," Brown said.

Outcome-based budgeting would be similar to a funding model developed for public universities in which a portion of state funding is tied to student completion of a degree or certificate, she said.

"This has spurred universities to invest in critical supports that engage and empower our highest-need students to overcome barriers and complete their college degrees," she said.

The announcement follows her call for independent reviews of the Department of Human Services and the De-



Gov. Kate Brown released a three-part blueprint for the state to fix government, grow the economy and invest in education.

partment of Energy. The Department of Human Services is under scrutiny for its slow response to reported problems at state-licensed foster care facilities. A probe into the Department of Energy centers on allegations that regulators bent rules in its tax incentive program for renewable energy projects.

The governor said she also would propose legislation in February to enhance government transparency but gave no details on what the proposal would entail.

She announced in November that she would create a new public records advocate, modeled after a role in other states such as Washington. The advocate serves as a liaison to assist the public in narrowing records requests and helping agencies to comply with public records law.

Brown declared her support for the Oregon Business Plan's goal of adding at least

25,000 jobs annually to the state economy.

To that end, she said she plans to propose legislation in February to expand the Office of Small Business Advocate. The office provides assistance to small business owners and helps them cut down time spent mired in bureaucratic red tape. Brown established the office when she served as secretary of state, before an ethics scandal forced Gov. John Kitzhaber to resign and elevated her to the state's highest office.

Supporting existing businesses is important because 70 percent of job growth stems from expansion of those companies, Brown said.

She said government also would assist in boosting the

economy by continuing to seek out trade opportunities in growing Asian markets.

The governor suggested the state needs to invest more in education but provided no plan to meet that need. The question grows more difficult to answer as the state faces mounting costs associated with the Public Employees Retirement System, as speakers at the summit pointed out.

Earlier Monday, Brown announced the addition of a new education innovation officer position to her administration to help boost the state's dismal high school graduation rate.

"The position will assist me, my education team and the Legislature in dedicating resources to increase the number of students who

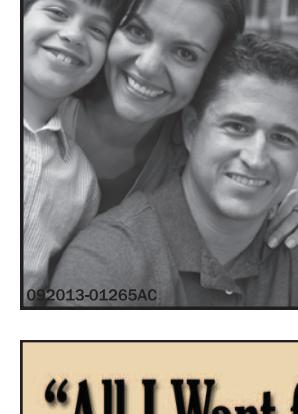
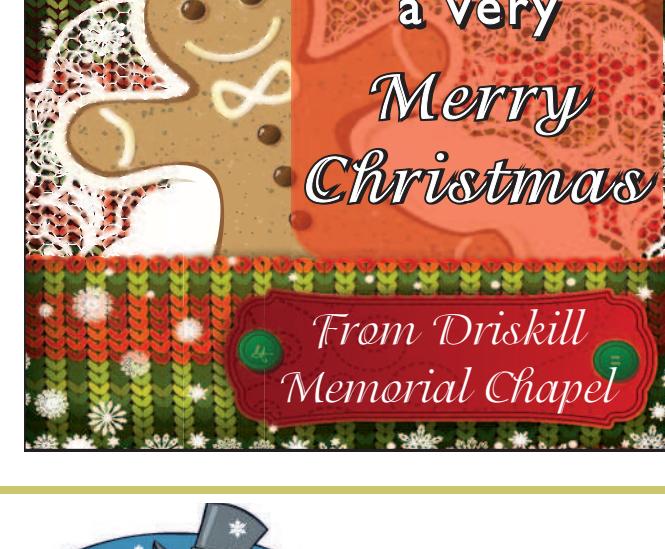
graduate from high school," Brown said from prepared comments.

"There is no question that our education system must be accountable to better student outcomes, including increasing our high school graduation rate," Brown said.

"But accountability also means ensuring that, as a state we are empowering the best and most effective practices in our classrooms that support student success," she said.

The administration has yet to complete a job description for the position and to post the job, said Brown spokeswoman Kristen Granger. She gave no timeline for hiring.

Oregon now has the fourth lowest graduation rate in the nation, up from the worst in the nation in 2013.



Balance Today with Retiring Tomorrow
No matter where you're starting from, COUNTRY can help you achieve financial security in retirement. It starts with listening to your situation. Then we help you build a straightforward plan with step-by-step guidance. Call me to get started today.
Debbie Ausmus
245 South Canyon Blvd.
John Day, OR 97845
OPEN WED. & THUR.
9 am - 5 pm
541-575-1113
24 hrs/7 days wk
COUNTRY
FINANCIAL

All I Want for Christmas Is to Be Pain-Free!

This holiday season, don't let aches and pains slow you down. Our holistic, hands-on approach to healing can put an end to chronic pain.

Call today to make an appointment

541-575-1063

Blue Mountain Chiropractic
HEALTH CLINIC
155 NW 1st Ave. • John Day



THE GRANT COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE reminds you to shop these local chamber members.

Advantage Dental	Community Counseling Services	Grant County Genealogical Society	Mobile Glass of Oregon
America's Best Motel	Community Hall Connections	Grant County Historical Museum	Mossy Oak/Copper Creek Land Company
Arrow Appliance Repair	Country Preferred Realtors	Grant County Kruzers Car Club	Northfork John Day River Watershed Council
Bank of Eastern Oregon	Debbie Ausmus Insurance Agency, Inc.	Grant County Snowballers	Old West Federal Credit Union
Benchmark Land Surveying	Department of Human Services	Grant/Harney County CASA	Oregon Guides Publishing
Bisnett Insurance	Doug's Motor Vehicle Repair	John Day Farmer's Market	Oregon State Employment Department
Blue Mountain Care Center	Driskill Memorial Chapel	John and Linda Shelk Foundation	Oregon Telephone Company
Blue Mountain Chiropractic	Duke Warner Realty	John Day Golf Club	Oregon Trail Electric
Blue Mountain Eagle	Eastern Oregon Realty	John Say Senior Center	Oster Professional Group
Blue Mountain Hospital	Eastern Oregon University	Juniper Press	Prairie Springs Fish Farm
Canyon Mountain Center	Ed Staub & Sons	KJDY	Robert Baggett PLS, CWRE
CenturyLink	ER Printing and Graphics	Land Title of Grant County, Inc.	Silvies Valley Ranch
Chester's Thriftway	Families First of Grant County	Long Creek Historical Society	State Farm Insurance
City of John Day	Ferguson Surveying & Engineering, Inc.	Maheur National Forest	Step Forward Activities
City of Long Creek	Four Seasons Plumbing	Maheur Employees Association	TEC Copier Systems
City of Mt. Vernon	Grant County Farm Bureau	MD Enterprises	Town of Canyon City
City of Prairie City			Valley View Retirement Center
City of Seneca			Virginia McMillan D.D.S.
Claus & Paws Pet Sitting			Vocational Rehabilitation
Columbia Power Co-op			

Grant County Chamber of Commerce
301 W. Main St. • John Day, OR 97845
541.575.0547
www.gcregonlive.com